

**MEDICAL LICENSING EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS
(USMLE AND/OR COMLEX)**

USMLE Steps 1 and 2 (CK and CS) and COMLEX-USA Level 1 and 2-CE

To ensure that all Residents* meet minimal standards, the UT College of Medicine Chattanooga and its Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) requires that **all** Residents entering any UT College of Medicine Chattanooga GME program must have passed the United States Licensing Examination (USMLE) Steps 1 and 2 (Clinical Knowledge) or COMLEX–USA Level 1 and 2-CE (for osteopathic graduates).

Any Agreement of Appointment Letter or Initial Letter of Commitment will be contingent upon the physician’s passing USMLE Steps 1 and 2 (CK) or COMLEX-USA Level 1 and 2-CE. Each Resident is responsible for providing copies of passing these exams to the Program Director and to the GME Office and will not be permitted to begin training until this documentation is submitted. A valid ECFMG certificate will be accepted as proof for international medical school graduates.

Accepted or matched Residents and Fellows who have not passed Steps 1 and 2 (CK) or COMLEX-USA Level 1 and 2-CE by July 1 (or the official training start date) will be released from their appointment. Any program that releases a Resident or Fellow who matched through the NRMP will be required to obtain a release from the NRMP before offering the position to another applicant.

USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX-USA Level 3:

All Residents are required to pass USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX-USA Level 3 before they can advance to the PGY-3 level. **All Residents on the typical appointment cycle must register for Step 3 or Level 3 no later than February 28 of the PGY-2 level of training.** The exam should be taken on or prior to June 1, in order to have scores available to the program and GMEC by June 30. Failure to register for the exam will result in the Resident being placed on leave without pay until proof of registration is provided to the Program Director and GME Office. Residents must provide proof of passing Step 3 by June 30 in order to be promoted to the PGY-3 level. Failure to provide proof of passing by June 30 may result in non-reappointment to the program, and the Resident may be terminated. It is the Resident’s responsibility to provide the necessary proof to the Program Director and GME Office.

Residents who are off cycle must register for the exam no later than the end of the 8th month of training during the PGY-2 level or be placed on leave without pay until registered. Proof of passing must be provided no later than the last day of the PGY-2 level or the Resident may not be reappointed to the program, and the Resident may be terminated.

Applicants for advanced Residency or Fellowship positions (PGY-3 or greater) must have passed USMLE Step 3 (or equivalent exam such as COMLEX Part 3) before entering the UT College of Medicine Chattanooga program.

Any Agreement of Appointment or Letter of Commitment to begin training at the PGY-3 level or higher will be contingent upon the physician having passed USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX-USA Level 3 before the start date. Accepted or matched Residents or Fellows who have not passed Step 3 or Level 3 prior to their scheduled start date will not meet eligibility requirements for entering programs at the PGY-3 or higher level and will be released from their appointment. Any program that releases a Resident or Fellow who has matched through the NRMP will be required to obtain a waiver from the NRMP before offering the position to another applicant.

Exceptions

Any Resident or Fellow who passed USMLE Steps 1 and 2 prior to 2004 will not be required to take Step 2 Clinical Skills. Any Resident who passed Steps 1 and 2 prior to June 1994 will not need to take Step 3. Any entering Resident who already holds an unrestricted Tennessee medical license already meets the USMLE requirement and does not have to provide additional documentation.

Individual programs may have earlier examination deadlines or specific score requirements. The Resident will be responsible for meeting individual program requirements if the program's requirements exceed the GME requirements.

Any exception to this policy may be brought to the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) by the Program Director. Only the Program Director may submit the written request and present it formally at the GMEC meeting. If an exception is granted by the GMEC, the Resident will be placed on leave without pay on their original advancement date and take USMLE Step 3 at the next available test date. The Resident will bring proof of passing to the Program Director and to the GME Office to be removed from leave without pay and advanced to the next level of training. The Resident may be required to extend training to make up any time and experience missed in accordance with the Residency Review Committee and board eligibility requirements. Failure to pass will result in immediate termination. The decision of the GMEC is final.

Resident Responsibilities

Each Resident is responsible for contacting the appropriate licensing authority to register for the examination. All examination fees are the responsibility of the Resident/Fellow, although some departments may permit the Resident/Fellow to be reimbursed from professional development funds at the discretion of the Chair and Program Director. Each Resident should carefully review the exam dates and policies to ensure that results will be available by the required deadlines.

Information on Step 3 is available in the [USMLE Bulletin of Information](#).

Information on COMLEX-USA Level 3 is available in the [COMLEX-USA Bulletin of Information](#).

In addition, many states have restrictions regarding time intervals between the three steps, so Residents should familiarize themselves with these requirements. In Tennessee, all USMLE steps must be taken and passed within seven years. General information regarding state-specific requirements for initial license can be obtained from the [Federation of State Medical Boards](#)

*The term “Resident” refers to both Resident and Faculty trainees.

Revised and Approved with Administrative Edits by the GMEC 7/19/2022.